

**REMARKS**

The Office Action dated January 29, 2007 has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendments to the application have been made in consequence thereof. Claims 1, 11, 17, and 19 have been amended and Claims 10 and 21 have been canceled in order to advance the prosecution of this application. Claims 1-9 and 11-20 remain active in this application.

The Examiner rejected claims 10-13 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite because there is no clear antecedent basis for “for each sling guide member” as recited in claims 10-13; and the phrase “a non-corrosive coating one on the steel” in claim 17 is not clearly understood. Claims 10-13 depend on claim 1, and claim 1 has been amended to more particularly describe a pair of sling guide members, and to describe each sling guide member, as described in the specification on page 9 lines 6-25. Thus, claim 1, as amended, provides clear antecedent basis for “each sling guide member” as recited in claims 10-13.

Claim 17 has been amended to delete the term “one” so that claim 17 describes a non-corrosive coating on the steel, as mentioned in the specification on page 11, lines 18-20.

The Examiner rejected, under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b), claims 1, 3, 5, and 6 as being anticipated by Kempel et al. (3,021,166); claims 1 and 3-7 as being anticipated by Moore (3,502,364); claims 1-3, 5-8, 19, and 20 as being anticipated by Roberts et al. (5,263,675); and claims 1, 3-7, 14, and 16 as being anticipated by Brown et al. (4,248,472). In addition, the Examiner rejected claims 14-18 under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over either Kempel et al., Moore, or Roberts et al.

The Examiner objected to claims 9 and 21 as being dependant upon a rejected base claim; but claims 9 and 21 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 1 and 19 have each been amended to include the teachings of claim 10, and claim 21, respectively, that is, to describe each sling guide member comprising a pair of guide plates arranged in a generally vertical orientation so as to contain a sling line therebetween, and a generally smooth and downwardly sloping surface between the guide plates for contacting the sling line during a lifting operation.

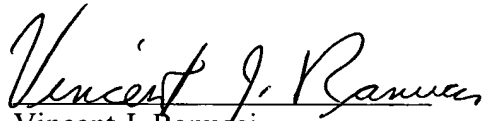
Claims 2-9, and 11-18 depend on amended claim 1. Claim 20 depends on amended claim 19. Claims 1 and 19, as amended, distinguish over Kempel et al., Moore, Roberts et al., and Brown et al., neither of which discloses a sling guide member as taught by amended claims 1 and 19. Claims 14-18, which depend on amended claim 1, would not be obvious over either Kempel et al., Moore, or Roberts et al. because none of the stated prior art would render the sling guide, as taught by amended claim 1, obvious.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that Claims 1-9, and 11-20 in this application are allowable and Notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

Should the Examiner wish to contact Applicant's attorney regarding this application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to do so by calling or writing the undersigned in the Office of Counsel, U.S. Army Soldier Systems Center, Natick, MA 01760 at (508) 233-4510.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

  
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